DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 400 300 TM 025 617

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TITLE Assessing the Literacy Growth of Fifth-Grade Students: A Question of Realigning Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment.
PUB DATE Apr 96
NOTE 31p.; Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Educational Research Association (New York, NY, April 8-12, 1996).
PUB TYPE Reports - Research/Technical (143) -- Speeches/Conference Papers (150)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC02 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Academic Achievement; Criterion Referenced Tests; *Elementary School Students; English; Grade 5; Intermediate Grades; Language Arts; Learning Disabilities; *Literacy; Mainstreaming; *Performance Based Assessment; *Reading Achievement; Self Evaluation (Individuals); *Student Evaluation; Student Placement; Thematic Approach; Values
IDENTIFIERS *Curriculum Alignment

ABSTRACT

Teachers conducting a thematically organized literature-based reading program centered around student-led discussion groups wanted to explore ways in which the values they wanted to promote could be reflected in the ways they assessed their students. This study considers how valuing a broader scope of language and literacy abilities and making these values part of an assessment system played out in the case of one male student, a representative of a population of students for whom assessment has been a high stakes venture and traditional assessments usually led to their removal from regular education classes to special education, isolated from regular education peers. The student was in his first year of mainstreamed education, in a class of 23 students, having previously been in special education. The Michigan English Language Arts Framework provided a model for describing students' progress. All 23 students participated in three assessment activities: (1) a criterion-referenced test consisting of traditional comprehension and vocabulary tests; (2) a performance-based assessment test designed to parallel daily language and literacy events; and (3) a self-assessment activity in which students evaluated their book club participation and their reading log entries. The student's performance on the criterion-referenced test by itself probably would have prevented him from participating in regular fifth-grade reading activities, but the other assessments gave him better opportunities to demonstrate his understanding, as well as more experience in reading activities. Taking a broader perspective means he is more likely to avoid long-term tracking and to preserve his self-esteem. (Contains 1 figure, 3 tables, and 11 references.) (SLD)

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Assessing the Literacy Growth of Fifth-Grade Students:

A Question of Realigning Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment

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Assessing the Literacy Growth of Fifth-Grade Students:

A Question of Realigning Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment

This study emerged out of some concerns raised during the our study of implementing a thematically-organized literature based reading program centered around student-led discussion groups. This project is a collaboration among Taffy Raphael, the Book Club Project director, Laura Pardo, a fifth grade teacher in whose classroom the study took place, Voon-Mooi Choo and myself, both research assistants on the Book Club Project. We were concerned that the range and scope of the language and literacy skills valued within the classroom were not reflected in the typical criterion-referenced and other standardized assessments used in evaluating students' progress. In short, we wanted to explore ways in which the values we wanted to promote – as classroom teacher, teacher educators in literacy instruction, and literacy researchers – could be reflected in the ways in which we assessed students. We also were interested in exploring how valuing a broader scope of language and literacy abilities and making these values part of an assessment system would impact individual students.

Our study explores how these concerns played out in the case of one student, Lenny, a fifth grader participating in a thematically- organized, literature-based reading program known as Book Club (see Raphael & McMahon, 1994; McMahon & Raphael, in press). This was Lenny's first year of being mainstreamed within a regular education classroom for his language arts instruction, having spent the preceding four years in a special education resource room. Lenny's fifth grade language arts experiences occurred within the Book Club Assessment Project (1994-95), a strand within the 6-year Book Club Project, spanning 1990 to 1996. Our choice of Lenny stemmed from the population of students that we felt he represented: students for whom assessment has been a high stakes venture, where the results of

traditional assessments have led to his removal from the regular education classroom to special education, and thus, an isolation from his regular education peers.

Our primary question was: **How do different forms of assessment within an overall "system" help develop students' profiles as literacy learners and users?** To address our primary question, however, we believed it important to begin by asking (a) what we valued in our literacy instruction, (b) how our values were tapped within traditional assessment measures used in the district, and (c) how our values aligned with the overall goals of literacy instruction within the state. In this paper, we begin with a brief discussion of literature that was influential to the study's development, then focus on the study and its outcomes.

Rationale for the Study

We drew on three areas of research for both designing the study and interpreting our data. First, recent articles examining the current efforts to create standards nationally, and specifically in Michigan, helped us identify the goals elementary school teachers are to use to describe students' progress (Fleischer et al., 1996; NCTE Elementary Section Steering Committee, 1996; Wixson et al., 1996). Second, descriptions detailing the importance and components of an assessment system raised important questions for us about potential variation in students' profiles depending upon the measures used to describe their literacy development. Third, research on alternative assessments helped us consider context-specific measures relevant to the particular students and specific classroom in this study.

The Michigan English Language Arts Framework (MELAF)

A standards-based approach to evaluating students' progress reflects a shift away from giving primacy to a specific test score to demonstrating competence in areas deemed important. Further, it reflects efforts to integrate across the language arts and break the cycle of separation reflected in the past English Language Arts (ELA)

curriculum characterized by disconnection and fragmentation (Wixson et al., 1996).

The MELAF project is representative of national trends to establish standards for all curricular areas (e.g., social studies, mathematics) and of organizations' responses to the national trend (e.g., NCTE/IRA English Language Arts Standards). The project's purpose was to "bring state goals and objectives in the areas of listening, speaking, writing, and literature together into a unified framework that aligns curriculum, instruction and assessment" (Wixson et al., 1996, p. 20). Like its national counterparts, the MELAF project engaged professionals, community members, and government organization in conversation and debate to establish a set of standards to guide the instruction and assessment of students within the state. The MELAF standards were adapted by the State Board of Education and approved in their adapted form by the Board in summer, 1995.

Demonstration sites were created to study the standards as they were enacted and interpreted by teachers. Initial feedback from these sites suggests that the potential for the success of these standards lies within the sites. It is within the specific sites that literacy educators can examine what the standards mean within different contexts for different purposes (Fleischer, et al., 1996). Consistent with the notion of the demonstration sites, this study creates a context from which educators can explore possibilities for aligning curriculum, instruction and assessment (Bisesi & Raphael, in press) with English Language Arts standards important within the state. When such alignment occurs, it makes it possible to develop a profile of an individual student's literacy ability and ensure that instructional decisions can be closely tied to the needs of specific students.

Assessment Systems: What Assessment for What Purpose?

The second area that influenced our thinking derives from Farr's (1992) research in exploring the assessment puzzle. Farr examines various pieces in the assessment puzzle which have led to confusion and debate within the reading field. He is particularly concerned with the increasing amount of assessment used in schools and the conflicts arising from the various stakeholders' needs for different kinds of information.

First, Farr notes that as public criticism of testing continues to mount, the amount of testing seems to increase, and while the education community has sought to develop alternative assessments, this movement also has led to more assessments. This rise in testing relates to Farr's second concern. One of the reasons for increased testing is that there are a range of needs among those for whom the tests are designed: parents' needs to understand their children's progress in school may require different kinds of information from teachers' needs to make instructional decisions, and these needs may vary from those of the legislature who may be allocating funds based on different schools' needs.

Thus, Farr (1992) notes that,

> Tests should be considered as nothing more than attempts to systematically gather information. The information is used to help children learn about their own literacy development and to give teachers, and others concerned with students' literacy, the information they need for curriculum planning. *The bottom line in selecting and using any assessment should be whether it helps students* (op cit., p. 28)

In the interests of efficiency, many districts have adopted standardized tests – some accompanying adopted basal reading programs, others even more generic – that provide a numerical evaluation of students' overall progress. For students such as

Lenny, we will see that such tests provide an extremely limited view of an individual's literacy abilities. In short, to paraphrase Farr, such tests ignore the importance of the bottom line being that, first and foremost, the test should help the student. Further, for programs such as Book Club, such tests – perhaps because of their efficiency – may be unable to provide insights into the range of language and literacy areas that are a part of the instructional focus. Thus, we agreed with Farr's argument that rather than thinking of assessment in monolithic terms, we consider assessment systems. These systems can provide a range of information representing the integrated language arts being taught in current instructional programs and, in doing so, meet the goal of providing relevant information to the variety of stakeholders who may have competing, or even conflicting, goals for assessment.

Creating Alternative Assessments

Given the difficulty of a single assessment format to meet everyone's needs, alternative measures of assessment are needed. Systems of assessment should represent what students can do and reflect the ways in which they learn, serving more to advocate for the levels of support and instruction that will help students grow in their literacy development (Taylor, 1993). The resolution of the assessment puzzle requires: (a) the integration and linkage of different types of assessments that can be accountable to more than one stakeholder at a time (Farr, 1992), (b) a recognition of the critical and central role that the teachers play in assessment development and practice (Au, et al., 1990; Johnston, 1992), and (c) that what the assessments measure focus on the needs of the specific and individual students being assessed. Several existing systems have been developed to meet these three requirements, systems we drew upon as we developed one that would make sense within the context of a Book Club classroom in the state of Michigan.

For example, Au et al. (1990) developed a portfolio as an umbrella for an

assessment system to describe students' progress within the Kamehameha Elementary Education Program. The portfolio was used to provide information on literacy growth to both teachers and students. Each students' portfolio contained evidence of their accomplishments in both reading and writing in six targeted areas. This assessment system was part of the daily ongoing activities within the classroom and the data collected was summarized and compared to grade level benchmarks set by the state. Such a system allowed the assessment to focus on students' learning while providing necessary information for various stakeholders when used with the benchmarks.

Creating alternative assessments, however, is not a simple task. Paris and his colleagues (Paris, Calfee, Filby, Hiebert, Pearson, Valencia, & Wolf, 1992) suggest that those developing assessment systems must create authentic assessments that reflect daily practices, allow students some ownership over what counts as well as the opportunity to self-evaluate, use assessment in a relationship with instruction so that the two systems feed into and effect one another, and provide flexibility in the collection and storing of the work. In the current study, we took seriously such suggestions as we developed two related assessment components. First, we created a performance-based assessment (see Bisesi & Raphael, in press) designed to capture the range of language and literacy abilities students were expected to use during Book Club to read, write, and discuss literature. Second, we created a portfolio system based on the teacher's and students' collecting artifacts related to their literacy learning, the teacher maintaining related anecdotal records on individual and groups of students, and students' participating in self-evaluation and reflection in their written work and oral activities.

Thus, to describe Lenny as a literate individual and to examine his developing literacy abilities, his teacher, Laura Pardo, and the other researchers could draw from

a range of sources from standardized to anecdotal evidence. In the next section we detail the methods we used to gather information about Lenny as it related to our research question.

Methods

We introduce Lenny whose activities and related artifacts provided the data for this set of analyses, then describe the context in which Lenny and his peers continued to develop their language and literacy abilities, the assessment tools that were used throughout 1994-95, and our analysis procedures.

Participants

Participating in the study were Laura and her fifth-grade students. Laura, in her 12th year of teaching, was one of the collaborating members of the Book Club Project team who created the thematically-organized, literature-based approach centered around student-led discussion groups. During the current study, she was in her fifth year of teaching using the Book Club program. She was interested in a better alignment between her curriculum and her assessment system and in means for conveying students' progress related to the soon-to-be adopted MELAF standards.

There were a total of 23 students in Laura's classroom, several of whom, like Lenny, were mainstreamed from a special education resource room for part or most of the day. Our focus for the study, Lenny, is an African-American male. He had been labeled learning disabled (L.D.), and had been in a special education classroom for much of his elementary grades. He was mainstreamed full-time in Laura's fifth-grade classroom. His reading, writing, and spelling abilities were below average, according to both standardized tests and to general classroom behaviors. He struggled with the actual physical act of writing, having trouble forming letters, spelling, and so forth, while his oral interactions reflected greater understandings of ideas and issues. Unlike his written literacy abilities, his oral comprehension and

verbal abilities and comprehension reflected that of an average fifth grade student. He always participated in book club groups, citing that time as a way he could keep up on what was happening in the story. He showed strong feelings about what he read, often arguing a point to convince his peers of his position if he felt he was right. Lenny's success in his work during the Book Club program stood in contrast to the resource room activities which had emphasized independent reading and associated skills practice.

Throughout the school year, students engaged in instructional events and activities within the Book Club program. Over the year, they read literature related to the megatheme, *How our nation developed*, some interdisciplinary literature connecting to their social studies program (e.g., Early Exploration: A meeting or a clash of cultures?; The Revolutionary War: A fight for self-governance; The Civil War: States rights or human rights?), and some intradisciplinary literature, based on a single novel (e.g., Paulsen's [1987] *Hatchet*), a genre (e.g., fantasy), or an author study (e.g., the books of Mildred Taylor). Within each unit, students read, discussed, and wrote about issues in their reading logs and during extended writing projects.

Each day, students participated in an opening community share. This is a whole class context focused on building community, connecting to previously read material and students' own lives, and/or learning specific language and literacy strategies relevant to the literature-based, discursive approach to literacy instruction (5 - 15 minutes). This was followed by students' silent reading of text to be discussed that day (10 minutes approximately). After reading, students recorded in their reading logs ideas that they planned to discuss within their small peer-led group discussions called "book clubs" (10 minutes approximately). Students then met in their "book clubs" for ten to twenty minutes after they had written in their logs. The daily Book Club events ended with a closing community share, during which Laura led

discussions synthesizing ideas and issues raised within the smaller book club discussions.

Procedures and Data Sources

Students participated in three assessment activities during the fall and the spring: (a) a criterion-referenced test consisting of the comprehension and vocabulary tests accompanying a traditional basal reading program, (b) a performance-based assessment test designed to parallel the daily language and literacy events (i.e., reading, writing in reading logs, peer-led discussions, community share) within the Book Club program described above, and (c) a self-assessment activity during which they evaluated their book club participation and their reading log entries. In addition to the formal assessment activities noted above, Laura maintained an informal portfolio for each student, as well as class sets of students' written artifacts throughout the year.

The criterion-referenced tests were published by Silver Burdett & Ginn (1993) as part of their basal reading program. The tests were typical: they had time constraints, with students' asked to engage in response to short passages followed by multiple choice questions, and to select words that would correctly complete or fit into a sentence. Scores were provided in both vocabulary and comprehension. In the fall, we used the end-of-year 4th grade form from the Silver Secrets Skill Progress Test. In the spring, we used the end-of-year fifth grade test from the Dream Chasers Skill Progress Test.

The performance-based assessment involved two two-day sets of literacy events – one set based on informational text, the other on fiction – related to book club in fall, and repeated in spring. Each two-day event involved students participation in opening and closing community share, listening to one chapter read by Laura, and then reading the subsequent chapter independently, writing their response to what

they had heard and read in their reading logs, discussing their responses during student-led discussions, or book clubs, and engaging in self-evaluation of their reading log entries and their book club participation.

The anecdotal records and related student artifacts that Laura maintained over the year included collected written work for each student, including their reading logs, thinksheets, and related extended writing projects. Further, Laura maintained a journal that included anecdotal records related to individual students' performance. Finally, Laura maintained classroom sets of papers related to Book Club participation. For example, she maintained the set of notes taken by all students as they watched an historical fiction film that took place during the Civil War, as part of the spring thematic unit.

Analysis Procedures

Our analysis involved two phases, shaped by the secondary and the primary research questions, in phases 1 and 2, respectively. First, to analyze issues related to alignment of tests and curriculum, we began by examining the relationship among the criterion-referenced test and the book club curriculum components. We then analyzed the alignment among: (a) the standards presented by the Michigan English Language Arts Frameworks committee, (b) those adaptations made by the Michigan State Board of Education in adopting the standards, (c) the Book Club Program curriculum, and (d) the sources of information available from the criterion-referenced tests, the performance-based assessment, and the portfolios and anecdotal records Laura maintained. In the second phase, we focused specifically on Lenny, developing a profile of literacy abilities using the assessment system.

Results: Phase 1 – Alignment

We began with a content analysis of the standardized test and related that to the goals identified within the Book Club curriculum. The Book Club curriculum detailed

in Raphael & Hiebert (1996) is presented in Table 1.

Insert Table 1 about here

An analysis of the content of the criterion-referenced tests, both the fall and spring versions, revealed, not surprisingly, that while the tests provided information about students' use of language conventions, particularly grammatical conventions and some comprehension strategies, it was mute with respect to most of the Book Club curriculum. More specifically, it provided no information about students response to literature, knowledge of literary elements, oral language use in interactions and response to text, or background knowledge and monitoring strategies related to comprehension (see Table 2).

Insert Table 2 about here

Armed with the knowledge from the content analysis, we then mapped the standards from the MELAF project, those adopted by the State Board of Education, and the Book Club curriculum to identify the assessment sources most likely to reveal information related to students' performance on the specific standards. Table 3 provides a summary of the two sets of standards, where these are addressed in the Book Club curriculum, and the assessment sources that would inform teachers about students' progress on the standards (see Table 3).

Insert Table 3 about here

From these analyses, it is clear that to provide a thorough picture of students' literacy abilities addressed within the Book Club curriculum and of importance to educators within the state, Farr's argument for an assessment system seems warranted. However, to examine the critical issue of whether or not this is "a difference that

makes a difference," we turned to our primary analysis of Lenny's literacy abilities as reflected across the assessment system information to develop his profile.

Results: Phase 2 – Lenny's Literacy Development

In this analysis, we developed a profile of Lenny, based initially on the criterion-referenced test alone, then adding the written data from the performance-based assessment, then the oral data from the peformance-based assessment, and finally adding the information available from the portfolios Laura maintained.

Based on the fall assessment test and the lack of information from the spring test (reasons for which are discussed when we draw upon portfolio information), Lenny's labeling as a student in need of special services is not surprising. We compared his performance on the criterion referenced tests to his peers in the fall and spring. On the fall test with 35 questions, Lenny correctly responded to 23. This score placed Lenny greater than 1 SD below his the average score within his class and well below the passing score set by the publishers of the test. A closer investigation of Lenny's test reveals that he did very well on the vocabulary questions (9 out of 10 correct) where he had to pick the correct word for a sentence, but had great difficulty in the comprehension section where he read passages and had to respond to questions about them (14 correct out of 25). The publisher's suggested passing scores are 8 out of 10 for straight vocabulary in the beginning session and 4 out of 5 for the vocabulary questions embedded within the comprehension section (analogy). Their suggested passing for the comprehension subtest is a total of 8 out of 10 (4 out of 5 main idea/details; 4 out of 5 fact/opinion), and literature is 8 out of 10 (4 out of 5 story elements; 4 out of 5 figurative language). In relation to the testmaker's standards, Lenny falls well below their passing scores on all measures except for the straight vocabulary questions.

These generally low scores and the lack of data from the spring (though he was

present during the test), raise questions about his ability or inclination to engage in the assessment process. When we examine his written log entries from the fall and spring performance-based assessments (see Figure 1 for the fall entry), we are able to identify specific areas that appear to be problematic for Lenny. On the fall entry, Lenny's use of manuscript rather than cursive writing represents an immaturity in his writing when compared to other fifth grade students. His spelling is not what one would expect from an average fifth grade students (e.g., "they cepe on rideing" for "they kept on riding"). For example, he seems to be aware of spelling conventions such as silent e's on the end of the word (i.e., "cepe" suggests he may have been thinking of the word "keep" in line 3), but does not use them appropriately. His sound/symbol correspondence reflects phonemic awareness (e.g., "cud" for "could" and "satl" for "saddle" in lines 4 and 5, respectively) but not a corresponding knowledge of how such phonemes are spelled conventionally. We see some knowledge reflecting structural analysis (e.g., the appropriate use of "ing" in line 4, but lack of knowledge of dropping the silent "e"). For these reasons, his log is difficult to comprehend (e.g., "tideti to the srogs houce" for "tied it to the strongest horse). Without efforts at decoding (in effect, "reading" his temporary spellings), it would be relatively easy – though perhaps misguided – to conclude that he had not understood the text and was unable to write a coherent response. Yet, once decoded, it is clear that he has used his phonemic awareness to create notes that help him remember his intended message.

The written assessments of Lenny's literacy abilities convey a student who is immature relative to his peers in the regular education classroom. Further, they suggest a student in need of learning conventional spellings. What is unknown from these measures alone is the degree to which Lenny's comprehension is as low as his ability to express his understandings. For a more complete, and perhaps more

accurate picture of Lenny's literary response and understandings, the oral language measures provide important insights.

Comprehension and response using oral language could be examined within the context of the performance-based assessment as well as Laura's anecdotal records and the portfolio she maintained. We examine four classroom events related to literacy activities: (a) the performance-based assessment book club on October 3, (b) the performance-based assessment book club on October 11, (c) a paired K-W-L-S activity during the inquiry phase of the thematic unit studying issues related to the Civil War, and (d) field notes describing his behavior related to the spring standardized test.

October 3, 1995: A Comparison of Log Entry and Book Club Contribution

The book club discussion segment below was in response to the novel, *Sing Down the Moon* and is typical of one type of interaction Lenny engaged in during the book club discussions. Like many of his peers, he drew on his reading log entry – in this case, the one illustrated in Figure 1 – as a way to enter the conversation, sharing what he had written with his peers in the group. The data provide a direct window into the disparity between Lenny's written and oral language facility and illustrate his phonemic awareness and ability to decode the text he has created in his reading log.

Julianne begins the exchange by asking Lenny, who had not yet participated in the conversation, to contribute. When Jerry responds instead, referring to an earlier part of their discussion, Laura, who was sitting near the group writing fieldnotes, signals that he should be quiet. Then, Lenny reads from his log. Note the lack of one-to-one correspondence between the printed text and his oral contribution. However, Lenny's conveys he is using his printed text, moving his eyes along the lines as he reads, keeping his eyes on the print in front of him and only occasionally looking up at his peers.

Julianne: Because she said her dad is in charge of saying whether she can get married to her (inaudible). Lenny what do you have to say?

Jerry: Man, I'd hate that. People'd be walkin', pullin' up your arm. Uh. And you couldn't stop 'em. This arm. They'd grab this arm with one hand, then pick the other...

Laura: (sitting near the group and taking notes, but not participating as an active member of the discussion) SSSHHH

Lenny: In this story today, Tall Boy got shot in the back. And by the slaves in the tree. But they kept on riding. And then he could not sit on the saddle, so they had to, so they had to tie him up to the saddle. And then he, he could not sit, and then they had to build a sled to pull him up by the strongest horse.

In comparing this the written work displayed in Figure 1, one can see that by filling in extra words, he conveys a clarity and understanding about story events. This begins to suggest a somewhat different profile than had emerged from the standardized test and the writing samples. Lenny's difficulty may not relate to the area of comprehension or expression, but within the acts of writing and in his ability to produce conventional print. His passing score on the vocabulary measure of the criterion-reference test, but difficulties on the comprehension test, coupled with his oral abilities to convey ideas and information he had recorded in his log suggests he may have difficulty working within the constraints of a timed test and without support from peers or adult more knowledgeable others.

October 11, 1995 Creating an Argument and Convincing his Peers

Further insights into his cognitive abilities and his engagement with the texts are revealed when we examine the performance-based assessment using a storybook biography about Christopher Columbus. During the October 11, 1994 assessment,

Lenny's book club explored a question one of the group members had raised: Why didn't believe Christopher Columbus when he said the world was round? As the conversation unfolds Lenny begins to assert that people thought the world was square and that was why they didn't believe Christopher Columbus. The group contests Lenny's use of the word "square," but Lenny expands his explanation, this time drawing on the text and making the point that it said only educated people knew the world is round. When the group seemed reluctant to agree with Lenny, he turned directly to the book for a reference. The following exchange occurs as Lenny locates the information in the text and points this passage out to his peers. Phillip does not acknowledge Lenny at this point, but Mandy provides explicit support. As the conversation continues, there are two competing topics on the floor, Lenny's argument that the uneducated thought the world was square, and some of his peers movement to continue sharing what they had written in their logs.

Lenny: See, it's right, it says it right. Right here.

Phillip: I drew a picture. I don't got it done.// Well, I predict that Christopher

Mandy: They, they did. They said only some people believed that the world was round.

Lenny, perhaps finding Mandy's support encouraging, continues to argue his position, pointing to sections of text that he is drawing upon to make his point.

Lenny: See. See, right here. The most

Julianne: I got, I got a character map too.

Lenny: Educated people knew that the earth was round, not all.

Julianne: I said _____, he likes to sail, he has demands, he's persuasive, the queen gives his demands wife died...

Lenny begins to suggest that neither the King nor Queen were educated and that is why they didn't support Christopher Columbus. He uses this argument to answer the

original question on the floor – why people didn't believe Columbus – and in the end gains the consent of his group as suggested by the end of this segment.

Lenny: Yes you did. Only the king and queen don't know, so how do you

Mandy: ...and a lot of people didn't know.

Lenny: I know. Only the people who had education knew.

Julianne: Like Christopher Columbus.

Lenny: Yeah.

This segment suggests that Lenny is able not only to understand the text and utilize it effectively to make a point, but also that he is capable both of holding his own with the rest of the students in his class and of incorporating the text to make his own inferences about the reason that the King and Queen did not initially support Christopher Columbus.

K-W-L-S Paired Activity: Negotiating to Achieve a Goal

Additional information and understanding of Lenny's cognitive capabilities is gained as we add information from Laura's teacher journal as well as from the portfolios and classroom artifacts she maintained. We draw on data from the second day of a K-W-L-S activity (see Ogle, 1986) when students had been asked to work in pairs to generate the questions they wondered about during the inquiry phase of the spring Civil War unit. The first day they had generated all they knew (the "K" of K-W-L) related to the Civil War, first writing in their journals, then brainstorming as a class about what they knew to enter onto a chart on the wall. The second day they were asked to consider what they wondered about (the "W" of K-W-L) and to record their ideas on paper. Students had been asked to work with a peer of their choice to brainstorm and record their suggestions, and that each could then suggest one question to put on the wall chart under "What I wonder about." The questions listed on the wall chart would then become the basis for those they would vote on to select

the top four question. The top four would then be used for small group inquiry later that week. Laura had not specified whether "each" generating a question meant each person or each pair. Lenny and Jerry were discussing potential questions. The following segment illustrates Lenny's interest and ability to generate a thought provoking and complex inquiry question, as well as his negotiating skills in helping Jerry understand that they would be better off EACH suggesting an inquiry question, doubling their chances of one of their questions being picked for the inquiry chart activities. The segment begins with Jerry's decision about what his preferred question would be.

Jerry: You could also say, um, why, um, who invented slavery? Why did they have slaves in the first place?

Lenny: What I'm gonna say/ I could say // um // um // How come there weren't Mexicans and Jews in that country instead of just white and black, 'cause, 'cause on the drinking fountain it said um colored and it could have been Mexican, or Jewish or all those.

Laura walks up behind the two students to see how they are doing, asking, "Are you guys thinking about a question?" Lenny responds, "yeah" as Jerry nods his head. As Laura walks away, Lenny begins talking directly to Jerry once again.

Lenny: and, uh, that's what I'm gonna say. You say "what was the, you say--

Jerry: [interrupts] We only can have one question [holds up one of his fingers for emphasis], she just said

Lenny: I'm going to ask one question, you say, uh, uh, what do they fight over besides land and slaves (Jerry nods) cause that's what I want to know and that's what you want to know, right (Jerry nods) so that's what we're gonna ask.

This exchange helps to support the different view of Lenny than that suggested by

the standardized test and the written measures alone. Rather, we begin to see a student engaged in his own learning, actively constructing questions of interest that are relevant to the broad theme studied within the unit. Further, we see that he is able to use his log as a place to record ideas (e.g., summarizing a favorite part of the story he had read), that he is not hesitant to bring these ideas to the attention of his peers for discussion, and that he is able to draw upon the text to convince his peers of his position in a discussion or debate.

Self-Evaluation and Motivation to Achieve

Laura's notes reveal how aware Lenny is of his own struggle for learning, his understanding of the high stakes nature of standardized tests, and his desire to present himself in the best light possible to those who may be in a position to evaluate him. An initial sign of his awareness was his selection of the page on his writing log depicted in Figure 1 as the one he thought was his best work. He noted that the entry was good because it was the longest one he wrote and that he wrote it about his favorite part in the book. Given the range and depth of Lenny's entries in his log, his sensitivity to the importance of both staying with an extended idea as well as focusing on something that he cares about suggests a level of awareness of the quality of his work.

Another example of this sensitive arose from our attempts to understand why Lenny had not completed the spring criterion-referenced test. Laura's notes reveal that he did not refuse to participate, but instead, took the task seriously. He asked to work on the test until he could get it to the point where he felt it was okay to turn in. He stayed with it for well over a week, struggling to read the words on his own, make sense of them without any support, and identify correct answers. As he became increasingly frustrated and discouraged, Laura stepped in and suggested that he did not need to finish it, that instead, we would use other assessments – his logs,

his classroom reports, his participation during book club and community share – to evaluate his literacy achievement. With relief, he abandoned the standardized test.

In summary, these data suggest considerable variation in Lenny's profile depending on the sources of information used. The more limited and traditional set reveal Lenny as a struggling reader and writer, one so immature relative to his peers that it would be likely that he be given access only to much easier text and work in highly prescribed circumstances where he could receive large amounts of time on the skills he is lacking. In contrast, the broader array available within an assessment system suggest that Lenny is able to understand grade level text, to respond to the text in a range of ways, and to interact in meaningful ways with his same-grade peers. He builds arguments, states positions, and plays an active role in defining the tasks at hand. The data are disturbing when we consider the implications of limited assessments for students locally within a given classroom, more broadly in their experiences throughout schooling, and in the long term as they become parents of the future generation of literacy learners.

Concluding Comments

Our study explored how the values we wanted to promote related to language and literacy instruction could be reflected in the ways we assess our students; and the degree to which the assessment system used kept the student as client as the primary focus. By examining the data from a single student – one who is part of a group of students for whom assessment can be a very high stakes process – we are able to show the importance of having a rich set of data sources from which to make instructional decisions.

Using solely the criterion-referenced test, Lenny's performance would likely have prevented him from participating with grade-level readers within his classroom. In fact, such gate-keeping functions of assessment had been a large part of Lenny's past

schooling, leading to his being pulled out of literacy interactions with regular education peers to practice reading skills in a special education resource room.

The assessment system, used for purposes of identifying Lenny's strengths as well as his needs provided Lenny with multiple opportunities to access print (through home reading support, classroom reading partners, books on tapes, additional reading time in school), and the opportunity to respond to the text in both written and oral situations. With the broader experiences of schooling – beyond the isolation of resource room classroom – Lenny is more likely to avoid long-term tracking, to avoid the increasingly low self-esteem problems typical of middle and high school special education students, and hopefully, feel more positive about his schooling as he moves into adult roles in the workplace and as a parent.

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Table 1

TABLE 9.1 Book Club Curriculum Chart

Language Conventions	Comprehension	Literary Elements	Response to Literature
Sound Symbol • spells conventionally • reads with fluency **Grammatical Conventions** • uses appropriate language choices: verbs syntax punctuation in oral reading, discussion, and writing **Interaction Conventions** • works with peers to set goals • interacts with peers in literacy contexts: • writing conferences • literary circles • author's chair	**Background Knowledge** • prediction • draws on prior knowledge • builds knowledge if needed • context clues • intertextual connections **Processing Text** • summarizing • sequencing • vocabulary • organizing and drawing on text structure knowledge • analyze-develop characters, setting, plot sequence, and so forth **Monitoring** • asking questions • clarifying confusions	**Theme** • author's purposes • connections to life **Point of View** • characters' POV • authors' POV **Genre-Structures** • story structure • expository structures • types of genres **Authors' Craft** • style • text features	**Personal Response** *Impressionistic response to literature, one's own writing, or the writing of peers* • shares experiences • shares personal feelings • places self-in-situation • compares self to character **Creative Response** *"Play" in response to literature* • "What if?" [changes event in story plot and explore impact] • dramatizing events, characters' attitudes or actions • illustrations of events, characters **Critical Response** *Analytic response to the "effectiveness," "purpose," or "coherence"; intertextual connections* • explains changes in beliefs or feelings • selects evidence from text to support ideas • critiques texts using specific examples • discusses author's purpose • identifies author's craft • discusses author's purpose • uses text as mirror of one's own life and as window into the lives of others

from T. E. Raphael & E. H. Hiebert (1996). Creating an integrated approach to literacy instruction. Ft.Worth, TX: Harcourt Brace College.

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TABLE 2.
A Content Analyses of the Fall and Spring Standardized Tests as Related to the Book Club Curriculum

Book Club Curriculum	Number of Corresponding Test Items**
Language Conventions	
• Sound Symbol	none
• Grammatical conventions	none
• Interaction Conventions	none
Comprehension	
• Background Knowledge predictions/inferences--	5 items fall; 5 items spring
• Processing Text	
---Summarizing	5 items fall; 0 items spring
---Drawing on Text Structure	5 items fall; 10 items spring
---Vocabulary	15 items fall; 20 items spring
---Analyze characters	5 items fall; 0 spring
• Monitoring	none
Literary Elements	
• Theme	none
• Point of View	none
• Genre/Structure	none
• Author's Craft	none
Response to Literature	
• Personal Response	none
• Creative Response	none
• Critical Response	none

*See Table 1 for expanded version of each element in the book club curriculum
**Total number of Test Items 70 (35 fall; 35 spring)

Table 3. Standards, Curriculum, and Assessment Relationships

English Language Arts Standards	State Board of Education	Book Club Curriculum	Assessment Source
	Read and comprehend general and technical material		Standardized test PfB assessment: log/book club transcript Portfolio: Anecdotal records (fieldnotes/LP)
	Demonstrate the ability to write clear and grammatically sentences, paragraphs, and compositions	Language Conventions: grammatical	Portfolio: • essays/reports from thematic units
Focus on meaning and communication as they listen, speak, view, read, and write in personal, social, occupational, and civil contexts.	Focus on meaning and communication as they listen, speak, view, read, and write in personal, social, occupational, and civil contexts.	Comprehension strand: background knowledge processing text monitor text Language Conventions: interaction patterns	Listening: • videotape notes • anecdotal records (read-aloud; listening to peers in community share) Viewing: • videotape notes • reenactment demonstration Speaking • PfB assessment: book club transcripts Reading • read aloud from reading logs • portfolio: report presentations • standardized tests as occupational context (school) Writing • reading logs
Use the English language effectively in formal situations within schools, communities, and workplaces by building upon an understanding of their own and other language patterns	Use the English language effectively (4)	Language Conventions: grammatical interactions	Pfb Assessment: • book club transcripts • self-evaluation of log • self-evaluation of discussion Anecdotal records • observing students' discuss norms of conversation, of writing logs, etc. [Gets at their definitions of "effective"
Interact with a wide variety of classic and contemporary literature and other texts to seek information, ideas, enjoyment, and understanding of their individuality, our common humanity and the rich diversity in our society	Read and analyze a wide variety of classic and contemporary literature and other texts to seek information, ideas, enjoyment, and understanding of their individuality, our common heritage and common humanity and the rich diversity in our society (5)	Literary Elements Response to Literature	Portfolio: • SSR [sustained silent reading] book choices • Book Club books read • Research project books read • Reading Logs PfB Assessment: • reading logs • transcripts

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View themselves as effective speakers and writers and demonstrate their expressive abilities by creating oral, written, and visual texts that engage their audiences	Learn to communicate information accurately and effectively and demonstrate their expressive abilities by creating oral, written, and visual texts that enlighten and engage their audiences (6)	Response to Literature: •personal •creative •critical	Portfolio: • Research report presentations [videotaped] • reading logs PfB Assessment: • reading logs • transcripts
Demonstrate, monitor, and reflect upon the skills and processes used to communicate through listening, speaking, viewing, reading, and writing	Demonstrate, analyze, and reflect upon the skills and processes used to communicate through listening, speaking, viewing, reading, and writing (7)	Comprehension: • monitoring	Portfolio: • self-evaluation (reflection/monitoring) • logs, transcripts, writing samples, reports, etc. (demonstrate) PfB Assessment • all materials (demonstrate)
Explore and use the characteristics of different types of texts, aesthetic elements, and mechanics – including text structure, figurative and descriptive language, spelling, punctuation, and grammar – to construct and convey meaning.	Explore and use the characteristics of different types of texts, aesthetic elements, and mechanics – including text structure, figurative and descriptive language, spelling, punctuation, and grammar – to construct and convey meaning (8)	Language Conventions Literary Elements	Portfolios • drafts vs. final (internalized automatic vs. known but not automatic) Reading Logs • character maps • essay or extended response Reports • final drafts (conventional spelling)
Demonstrate understanding of the complexity of enduring issues and recurring problems by making connections and generating themes within and across texts	Demonstrate understanding of the complexity of enduring issues and recurring problems by making connections and generating themes within and across texts (9)	Comprehension Response to Literature • critical	PfB Assessment. Portfolio • tapes of community share/ themes and issues
Apply knowledge, ideas, and issues drawn from text to their lives and the lives of others	Apply knowledge, ideas, and issues drawn from text to their lives and the lives of others (10)	Response to Literature	Logs and Discussions • classroom • PfB Assess
Define and investigate important issues and problems using a variety of resources, including technology to explore and create texts	Define and investigate important issues and problems using a variety of resources, including technology to explore and create texts (11)	Research Units	Portfolio • research units
Develop and apply personal, shared, and academic criteria for the enjoyment, appreciation and evaluation of their own and others' oral, written and visual texts.	Develop and apply personal, shared, and academic criteria for the enjoyment, appreciation and evaluation of their own and others' oral, written and visual texts. (12)	Response to Literature	PfB Assessment • discussions • logs • self-assessment Portfolio • discussion • logs

Figure 1

DATE 10-2-94

In the story today Tall boy got Shot in the back be the Slavers in a tree but they Cepe on -rideing and thin he cad not sit on the Satl. so he toide they to tide he up so he cod lay on the horse and then ta blit then thay put hem on a sled and tideti to the Srogs houce.

Figure 1. Lenny's Log from Performance Based Assessment 10/3/94